

Excerpt from Memoirs of Prince KONOYE

On the afternoon of the same day, MUTO, the Chief of the Military Affairs Bureau, came to the Chief Secretary of the Cabinet, and said, "Somehow or other it seems that the reason that the Premier can not make up his mind due to the fact. Thus, of the Navy really does not wish war the Army also must think about it. But the Navy does not say anything openly to the Army and only says that 'it will leave it up entirely to the Premier'. Just to say that it will be up to the decision of the Premier will not be enough to control the inner circles of the Army. But if the Navy will openly come to the Army and say that 'The Navy at this time does not wish war,' then the Army can easily control its command. I wonder if you can not manage it so that the Navy will come and say something along this line." Thereupon, the Chief Secretary spoke to OKA, the Chief of the Navy Affairs Bureau, concerning this matter, but all that the latter could say was this: "As far as the Navy is concerned, no matter what anyone may think, for it to day that it does not wish war is something that it can not do in any formal manner. What the Navy can say is that 'it is entirely up to the decision of the Premier.'"

Again that same night, SUZUKI, the President of the Cabinet Planning Board, came to my home in Ogikubo as the messenger of the War Minister. The War Minister's message was as follows: "According to what we have been able to discover lately, it looks as if the Navy does not wish to have war. If this is so, why does not the Navy Minister clearly say so to me? If there were any clear statements to me from the Navy Minister than I too would have to reconsider matters once more. But it look as if the Navy Minister is making the Premier shoulder the entire responsibility. This is indeed a matter of regret. If the Navy can not make up its mind, the conference on September 6th in the presence of the Emperor will have been fundamentally overturned. Hence, this would mean that, beginning with the Premier, the Ministers of War and the Navy and the President of the Supreme Command all did not sufficiently perform their responsibilities as advisors to the throne. Hence I believe that there is no other way but that at this time we all resign, declare insolvent everything that has happened up to now, and reconsider our plans once more. There is no one who is now a subject who has the power to keep control over the Army and the Navy and to refashion a plan. Therefore, I believe that at this time no other way but to have an Imperial Prince come forth as the leader of the next Cabinet. I believe, to

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begin with, that among the Imperial Princes, Prince HIGASHIKUNI is most suitable for the position. As far as myself am concerned, it is very hard for me to ask the Premier to resign, but as matters now have come to pass, I can not help but do so. I should like to beg that you kindly exert your efforts to having the Emperor ask Prince HIGASHIKUNI to become the next Premier."

The next day, the 15th, I went to the Palace and reported on developments since the last time that I had been there. The Emperor remarked: "If the War Minister is in discord with the other members of the cabinet, it is reasonable for the Premier to replace him by some other person who will agree with himself. Unfortunately, however, a tradition has been established that the recommendation of the War Minister should be in the hands of the 'Three Head of the Army', making it very difficult for the Premier to choose the person he considers fit for the post." In reply to this, I said: "In the past few days no small number of people have visited me in order to urge me to dismiss the War Minister and to act up to my own conviction. Some even suggested that in case I fail to find a person suitable for the post, I myself had better become chargé d'affaires for the War Department. In my opinion, however, such a step would end in confusion and do no good to the nation. Last night I received a message from TOJO, suggesting that Imperial Prince HIGASHIKUNI be recommended as the head of the coming cabinet." Thus I inquired concerning the inner feelings of the Emperor. Whereupon the Emperor said, "Prince HIGASHIKUNI, I believe, is indeed most suited to his position as Chief of the General Staff. And I believe that to have a member of the Imperial Family stand in a governmental position is something that requires considerable thought. In time of peace, it would be all right, but in a situation in which we fear that there

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may be war, and when we also think further of the interests of the Imperial House, I question the advisability of a member of royalty standing forth", but it did not seem that he was completely out of favor with the idea. On the way home, I met Marquis KIDO, the Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal, and broached the matter of Prince HIGASHIKUNI, but the Lord Keeper seemed not at all to rise to the idea.

The same night, I secretly visited the residence of Prince HIGASHIKUNI, reported to him the opinions of TOJO, the War Minister, and urged him to come forth. But the Prince said, "the matter is too important, so please let me think about it for two or three days." On the morning of the next day, the 16th, I spoke over the telephone with the Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal but he said, "As to the matter of the Prince, there are great difficulties at the Imperial Court." But the situation was such that it did not allow for even a single day's delay. Thus from about ten o'clock in the morning, I had each Cabinet member come individually to the Japanese-style room of my official residence, stated the unavoidable reasons for a resignation, obtained their understanding, and in the evening, after gathering together all of their letters of resignation, went to the Palace. The letter of resignation of the Premier at that time was as follows.

After presenting the resignation, I met the Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal, whereupon he said, "The Emperor will not appoint Prince HIGASHIKUNI as the next leader of the Cabinet. The leader of the next Cabinet will in any case become the subject of consultation at the meeting of the senior statesmen tomorrow, but as far as I myself am concerned, looking



back on the chain of events up till today, I feel that it seems reasonable that the command to form the next Cabinet will fall on either the Navy or War Minister. As to which is better, the Navy or War Minister, we are now greatly racking our brains over it. What is your opinion?" thus, I was asked by the Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal, so I said, "From the point of view of political I feel that it is a post that is more suitable to the War Minister than to the Navy Minister. At the same time the situation as it now stands is such that the War Minister is on the surface opposed to the continuation of negotiation between Japan and American; but, just as we may understand from his talk of two or three days ago, he even states that as long as the opinion of the Navy is not clear, we ought to declare everything insolvent and revise our plans, so I think that even if the Minister of War were to receive the command to form the next Cabinet, he would not plunge us immediately into war. Especially if there were a few words to this effect at the time of the command, I feel that the War Minister will take a prudent attitude all the more." It seemed that the Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal also was of the same opinion.

CERTIFICATE OF SOURCE AND AUTHENTICITY

I, OGANE, Masujiro, who occupy the post of Chief, Document Division, Office of the Grand Chamberlain, do hereby certify that the document hereto attached, written in Japanese, consisting of 5 pages and entitled "Excerpt from the KONOYE Memoirs" is a true and accurate copy of an excerpt from a document in the custody of the Document Division, Office of Grand Chamberlain.

Certified at Tokyo,

on this 10th day of December, 1946.

/S/ OGANE, Masujiro (seal)

I hereby certify that the above signature and seal were affixed hereto in the presence of the Witness.

On the same date,

at the same place.

Witness: MATSUDAIRA, Yasumasa (seal)

## 近衛公手記

十四日午後、武藤軍務局長ガ書記官長ノ處ニ來テ「ドウモ總理ノ吐ガ決ラナイカラダト思ハレル。デ、海軍ガ本當ニ戦争ヲ欲シナイノナラバ陸軍モ考ヘナケレバナライ。然ルニ海軍ハ陸軍ニ向ツテハ表面ハサウ云フコトハロニシナイデ、唯「總理一任」ト云フコトヲ云ツテ居ル。總理ノ裁斷ト云フコトダケデハ陸軍ノ部内ヲ抑ヘルコトハ到底出來ナイ。然シ「海軍ガコノ際ハ戦争ヲ欲セズ」ト云フコトヲ公式ニ陸軍ノ方ニ云フテ來ルナラバ、陸軍トシテハ部下ヲ抑ヘルニモ抑ヘ易イ。何トカ海軍ノ方カラサウ云フ風ニ云フテ來ル様ニ仕向ケテ貰ヘマイカ。」ト云フコトデアツタ。其處デ書記官長ハコノコトヲ岡海軍軍務局長ニ話シタ處ガ岡軍務局長ハ「海軍トシテハ戦争ヲ欲シナイト云フコトハドウモ正式ニハ言ヘナイ。海軍トシテ言ヒ得ルコトハ、「首相ノ裁斷ニ一任」ト云フコトダケガ精一杯デアル。」

又同夜、陸軍大臣ノ使トシテ鈴木企堂院總裁ガ代表ニ來訪シタ。陸軍

大臣ノ傳言ハ次ノ如クデアアル。「一段々其後探ル處ニヨルト海軍ガ戰爭ヲ欲シナイ様デアアル。ソレナラ何故海軍大臣ハ自分ニソレヲハツキリ言フテクレナイノカ。海軍大臣カラハツキリ話ガアレバ自分トシテモ亦考ヘナケレバナランノデアアル。然ルニ海軍大臣ハ全部責任ヲ總理ニ負ハシテ居ル形ガアル。之ハ洵ニ遺憾デアアル。海軍カサウ云フ様ニ耻ガ決ラナイナラバ九月六日ノ御前會議ハ根本的ニ覆ヘルノダ。隨ツテ御前會議ニ列席シタ首相初メ陸海軍大臣モ統帥府ノ總長モ皆輔弼ノ責任ヲ充分ニ盡サナカツタト云フコトニナルノデアアルカラ、此際ハ全部辭職シテ今迄ノコトヲ御破算ニシテ、モウ一度案ヲ繰リ直スト云フコト以外ニナイト思フ。ソレニハ陸海軍ヲ抑ヘテモウ一度コノ案ヲ繰リ直スト云フ力ノアルモノハ、今臣下ニハナイ。ダカラドウシテモ後繼内閣ノ首班ニハ今度ハ宮樣ニ出テ頂クヨリ以外ニ途ハナイト思フ。ソノ宮樣ハ先ヅ東久通宮殿下ガ最モ適任ト思フ。ソレデ自分トシテハ總理ニ辭メテタレトハ甚ダ言ヒニクイケレドモ、事コ、ニ至ツテハ已ムヲ得ヌ。ドウカ東久通宮殿下ヲ後繼内閣首相ニ奏請スルコトニ御盡力ヲ願ヒ度イ。」

翌十五日參内。其ノ後ノ經過ヲ奉上シタ。陛下ハ「陸軍大臣ガ閣内ニ於テ異論ヲ唱ヘタナラバ、陸軍大臣ヲ總理ガ辭メサセテハ總理ト同意見ノ陸軍大臣ヲモツテ來ルコトガ常道デアアル。然ルニ陸軍大臣ノ推薦ハ、陸軍ノ三長官ガスルト云フ慣例ガアツテ、總理ノ思フ通りノ陸相ヲ得ラレ



ナイト云フコトハ困ツタ制度デアル。ト仰セラレタ。之ニ對シテ自分  
ハ「自分ノ所ニハ二三日来陸軍大臣ヲ罷免シテ迄飽迄所信ヲ貫徹セヨ、  
ト激勵シテ來ルモノガナカク多イ。中ニハ自分ノ欲スル陸軍大臣ヲ得  
ラレナイ場合ニハ、總理ガ陸軍大臣事務管理トナルコトモ一方法デアル  
ト云フコトヲ示唆シタ者モアリマシタ。然シカクノ如キ手段ヲトルコト  
ハ、徒ラニ混亂ヲ起スバカリデアツテ、國家ノ爲ニ執ラサルトコロデア  
リマス。其處デ昨夜實ハ東條カラノ傳言デ、後繼内閣ノ首班ニ東久通宮  
殿下ト云フコトヲ云ツテ來テ居リマス。ト、陛下ノ御内意ヲ伺ツテ見  
タ所ガ、陛下ハ「東久通宮殿下ハ參謀總長トシテハ實ニ適任デアルト思  
ツテ居ツタ。然シ皇族ガ政治ノ局ニ立ツコトハ之ハ餘程考ヘナケレバナ  
ラント思フ。殊ニ平和ノ時ナラバ好イケレドモ、戦争ニデモナルト云フ  
處ノアル場合ニハ尙更皇室ノ爲カラ考ヘテモ、皇族ノ出ルコトハドウカ  
ト思フ。」ト仰セラレタガ、絕對ニ御不賛成デモナイヤウニ拜セラレタ。  
歸途、木戸内府ニ會ヒ、東久通宮ノ問題ヲ持出シタ所ガ、内府ハドウモ  
一向氣乗リシナイ模様デアツタ。

同夜秘カニ東久通宮殿下ヲ御邸ニ訪問シ、東條陸相ノ意嚮ヲ申上ゲ、  
殿下ノ御奮起ヲ促シタ所ガ、殿下ハ「コト餘リ重大デアルカラ二、三日  
考ヘサセテクレ」ト云フコトデアツタ。翌十六日朝、電話デ内府ト話シ  
タ所ガ「宮殿下ノ問題ハ宮中方面ニ於テモ到底ムツカシイ」ト云フコト

デアツタ。然モ時局ハ一日ノ猶餘モ許サレナイ。其處デ午前十時頃ヨリ各關係ニ個別ニ官邸日本問ニ來テ貰ツテ辭職ノ已ムヲ得ナイ理由ヲ述ベ諒解ヲ求メテ夕刻全部ノ辭表ヲ取纏メタ上參内シタ。其時ノ總理ノ辭表ハ次ノ如クデアル。

辭表捧呈後内大臣ニ面會シタ處ガ「後繼首班トシテ東久通」宮殿下ハ宮中ニ於テ御採用ニナラナイ。後繼内閣ノ首班ハ、何レ明日重臣會議デ相談スルコトニナルガ、自分自身ノ考ヘトシテハ今日迄ノ經過ニ鑑ミテ海軍大臣カ陸軍大臣カ何レカニ大命カ降ルノガ筋ガ通ル様ニ思フ。海陸何レガヨイカト云フコトニ今非常ニ苦慮シテ居ル。貴下ノ考ヘハドウカ。ト内府カラ聞カレタカラ「政治的ニミレバ海相ヨリハ陸相ノ方が適任ト思フ。且陸相ハ表面ハ日米交渉ノ繼續ニ反對シタコトニナツテ居ルガ、兩三日來ノ話ニヨツテモ分ル様ニ、海軍ノ意氣ガハツキリセヌ以上ハ一度全部御破算ニシテ案ヲ練リ直スト云フコトモ云ツテ居ル位ダカラ、陸相ガ大命ヲ拜シタカラト云ツテ直ニ戰爭ニ突入スルコトモナイト考ヘル。殊ニ大命降下ノ際ニ何等カ御言葉デモアレバ、陸相トシテハ一層慎重ナ態度ヲ執ルコトダラウト思フ。ト述ベタ。内府モ略同意見ノ様デアツ

文書ノ出所竝ニ成立ニ關スル證明書

自分大金益次郎ハ侍從藏内記部長ノ職ニ居ル者ナル處竝ニ添付セラレタル日本語ニ依ツテ書カレ五頁ヨリ成ル事近衛公手記拔萃ト題スル書類ハ侍從藏内記部ノ保管ニ係ル公文書ノ拔萃ノ正確ニシテ眞實ナル寫ナルコトヲ證明ス

昭和二十一年十二月十日 於東京

署名 大金益次郎 印

右署名捺印ハ自分ノ面前ニ於テ爲サレタリ

同日 於 同 所

立會人 松平康昌